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Amendments To The Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1-16. (Cancelled).

17. (Currently Amended) A screening method for a compound capable of changing the binding activity of a ligand polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 73, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, or a partial peptide of said ligand polypeptide, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, with a receptor protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:19, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:21, SEQ ID NO: 22, or SEQ ID NO:22, or a salt thereof, or a partial peptide of said receptor protein, or a salt thereof, the method comprising making a comparison of said binding activity between:

(i) at least one case where said ligand polypeptide, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, or a partial peptide of said ligand polypeptide, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof is contacted with a receptor protein or a salt thereof or a partial peptide of said receptor protein, or a salt thereof, and

(ii) at least one case where said ligand polypeptide or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof, or a partial peptide of said ligand polypeptide, or its amide or ester, or a salt thereof together with a sample containing the compound to be tested is contacted with the receptor protein or a salt thereof or a partial peptide of said receptor protein or a salt thereof.

18-20. (Cancelled).

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21. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the ligand polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:47, SEQ ID NO:48, SEQ ID NO:49, SEQ ID NO:50, SEQ ID NO:51, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO:61, SEQ ID NO:62, SEQ ID NO:63, SEQ ID NO:64, SEQ ID NO:65, or SEQ ID NO:66.

22. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the ligand polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:44, SEQ ID NO:45, or SEQ ID NO:59.

23. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the receptor protein comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:21.